

INFORMATION REPORT

**CONFIDENTIAL**

COUNTRY Paraguay  
SUBJECT Political Prisoners in Paraguay

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SUPPLEMENT TO  
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1. The approximate number of political prisoners in Paraguay as of 1 August 1948 is as follows:

A. In Public Jail in Asuncion:

(1) Communists	200
(2) Political prisoners other than Communists	300

B. In military prison of Pena Hermosa

C. In jails in towns in interior

Approximate total number of political prisoners in Paraguay, including communists: 1250

Of the estimated 800 non-communist political prisoners, the majority are Liberals, many of whom are caudillos from the interior. Second in number are Febreristas. Many of these have been in jail since the coup of 13 January 1947, when the Colorados ousted the Febreristas from the coalition government. The remaining prisoners are democratic Colorados and miscellaneous persons.

2. The following statistics cover a period of 48 days from 9 June 1948 through 29 July 1948:

A. Total number political prisoners arrested	-- 120*
B. Total number political prisoners released	-- 218**
C. Total number persons ordered to leave country for political reasons	-- 11
D. Total number persons ordered confined to interior for political reasons	-- 12

\*Of these, 25 were never put in jail and were released within 48 hours from the time they were arrested.

\*\*This figure includes the 25 persons mentioned above as being freed within 48 hours from the time they were arrested.

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Comments

1. The authority for issuing these arbitrary orders of arrest, exile and confinement may come from any one of several of the strong men in the government, but usually come from the Chief of the Asuncion Capital Police, the Minister of Interior, or Chief of Investigations of the Asuncion Police. The orders are carried out by agents of the Division of Investigations. No legal process is issued in most cases.
2. These statistics cover a period of relative quiet in Paraguayan political affairs.
3. The considerable number by which releases of political prisoners exceeded the number arrested is interesting in view of Provisional President Manuel Frutos' campaign of pacification in the country after he assumed office on 3 June 1948.
4. The conditions under which these political prisoners live in the Public Jail are notoriously bad. They are quartered in the same place with the approximately 350 criminal prisoners of the country.
5. On 12 July 1948 the newspaper La Tribuna published a press release of the government Office of Information which stated that President-Elect Natalicio Gonzalez had been interviewed by a reporter from La Critica of Buenos Aires. "Responding to a question as to the number of political prisoners, he replied, 'None. The only prisoners are those who have committed common crimes.'"

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